

*december*TRAVEL

New Ways to Winter

*Forget your skis and ice skates—get out of the house
for these five surprising winter outings.*

Winter hiking on Mount
Washington in New Hamp-
shire's White Mountains
promises snow and solitude.

photograph
Jerry & Marcy Monkman

encased in a sea of green. When you turn out the light, the quirky charm glows like a winter star. —Megan Fulweiler

The Providence Arcade, 65 Weybosset St., Providence, RI. 401-861-9150.

SEEING STORIES IN WINTER'S GROUND

*White Mountain National Forest,
Pinkham Notch, NH*

When you pay attention to the ground in winter, and if you are being guided by someone who can read a winter ground as easily as a book, these questions emerge: Is that track from a walker, hopper, bouncer, or waddler? Are those teeth marks on the trees? On the day I join the Curious Naturalists animal tracking and snowshoe workshop with the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), we have perfect conditions for tracking—a fresh thin layer of snow over a hard-packed surface.

Over nearly five hours, we follow numerous animal prints and see every track pattern but the waddlers. Squirrel, fox, deer, fisher, marten, ermine, shrew, and mouse tracks are abundant. We track a moose, finding its scat and some hairs left behind in its tracks, as well as a snowshoe hare. Once we flush out a grouse. Finally, the sun sinks down in the sky and the temperatures drop. It is time to head back to where we started, the AMC's visitors' center.

Afterward, we make our own tracks to the luxury of The White Mountain Hotel and Resort in North Conway, where we will spend the night. We treat ourselves to dinner in The Ledges Dining Room and to a soak in the outdoor hot tub. Weary after a long day in the woods, we fall asleep with full bellies



The snowshoe hare's large hind feet and long legs leave these tracks in the snow.

White Mountain Weekend

The Appalachian Mountain Club hosts guests at the Joe Dodge Lodge (603-466-2727; outdoors.org), adjacent to the visitors' center at Pinkham Notch, which puts you right at the trailhead as soon as you roll out of bed. Rates: \$43-\$76, depending on type of stay. The White Mountain Hotel and Resort (2660 West Side Rd., North Conway; 800-533-6301, 603-356-7100; whitemountainhotel.com), has 80 rooms and 13 suites available from \$89 to \$269 (full breakfast included midweek November to mid-June). The Ledges Dining Room is locally known for its Sunday brunch buffet (\$15.95). Dinner entrées: \$19-\$29. Our favorite casual place is Moat Mountain Smoke House & Brewing Co. (3378 White Mountain Hwy., North Conway; 603-356-6381; moatmountain.com). Go for the beer, stay for the barbecue and wood-fired pizzas. Entrées: \$7.95-\$23.50.

JERRY & MARCY MONKMAN; INSET: DAVID MIDDLETON

and thoughts of the creatures making their way through the woods, leaving their stories for others to find tomorrow.

– Kathryn LoConte

Appalachian Mountain Club, Pinkham Notch Visitor Center, Rte. 16, Pinkham's Grant, NH. Rates: one- to two-day workshops free and fee-based; call or visit Web site for more information. 603-466-2727. outdoors.org